



SITUATION ANALYSIS

Cash assistance allows refugee families themselves to decide their most immediate needs and priorities and to spend accordingly. Experience has shown that the use of cash assistance has several advantages, particularly in Lebanon where refugees live in 1,700 localities, making on site distribution of traditional aid items extremely expensive and logistically difficult for agencies as well as beneficiaries.

As part of the shift from direct distribution of in-kind relief items for vulnerable refugees to the provision of humanitarian cash assistance, 14,000 poor refugee families received financial assistance in the past month. Refugees are primarily using the money to supplement food, rent, health and education costs. A refugee family receives cash assistance after its economic vulnerability has been assessed through a household visit. To date, over 40,000 refugee households have been assessed. Out of these, 17,000 were determined to need financial help. Household visits are prioritized based on referrals from field staff, community outreach volunteers, and registration data.

The majority of poor refugee families live in substandard shelters (63%) spread throughout the country, with the highest number living in the Bekka (37%), Akkar (25%), Tripoli (10%) and Beirut (7%). The families assessed are made up of more than 200,000 individuals, among whom 19% are adult males, 26% are adult females, and 55% are children.

Out of the households profiled, almost 37,000 (89%) are in debt, confirming that refugees largely cope with their increasing vulnerability through loans. Other coping mechanisms include withdrawing children from school. Almost 28,000 families have children between the ages of 6 and 14, of which more than half (nearly 15,000) have withdrawn their children from school.

The household visits allow partners to have a better picture of the everyday situation of refugee families and to provide more individualized assistance. Through the collaborative effort of the basic assistance and food security sectors, the questionnaire is being further refined to make it more efficient and user friendly for both the refugees and data collectors.

